

In the Claims:

✓ Claims 1-18, kindly cancel without prejudice.

Kindly add the following new claims:

47. (New) An amusement article according to claim 22 wherein the microbe-inhibiting agent is present from 0.001 to 10 percent by weight of the unitary piece of material.
48. (New) An amusement article according to claim 22 wherein the microbe-inhibiting agent or property is 3-trimethoxysilylpropylmethyloctadecyl ammonium chloride.
49. (New) An amusement article according to claim 22 wherein the microbe-inhibiting agent or property is 2,4,4'-trichloro-2'-hydroxydiphenol.
50. (New) A process according to claim 23 wherein the microbe-inhibiting agent comprises a microbe-cidal agent selected from at least one of the group consisting of heavy metal salts, halogenated dioxides, quaternary ammonium compounds, halogenated compounds, sulfur compounds, phenyl derivatives, phenoxy derivatives, thiazoles, chlorinated phenolic compounds, poly-substituted immine salts and phosphate esters, and mixtures thereof.
51. (New) A process according to claim 50 wherein the microbe-cidal agent is chlorine dioxide.
52. (New) A process according to claim 50 wherein the microbe-cidal agent is 2,4,4'-trichloro-2'-hydroxydiphenol.
53. (New) A process according to claim 32 wherein the microbe-inhibiting agent comprises a microbe-cidal agent selected from at least one of the group consisting of heavy metal salts, halogenated dioxides, quaternary ammonium compounds, halogenated compounds, sulfur compounds, phenyl derivatives, phenoxy derivatives, thiazoles, chlorinated phenolic compounds, poly-substituted immine salts and phosphate esters, and mixtures thereof.

54. (New) A process according to claim 53 wherein the microbe-cidal agent is chlorine dioxide.

55. (New) A process according to claim 53 wherein the microbe-cidal agent is 2,4,4'-trichloro-2'-hydroxydiphenol.

9 ~~56~~. (New) A textile-based amusement article to be played with, enticed or retrieved by a domestic animal comprising:

an outer textile casing formed of a tough, chew-resistant material defining a shape in the form of a small article for luring or being fetched by the domestic animal and comprising a high-pile component attached to a backing material to form an artificial fleece, the material formed in two layers sewn together at the edges with the high pile component outwardly; and

a microbe-cidal agent applied to the textile casing in an effective amount and is selected from at least one of the group consisting of heavy metal salts, halogenated dioxides, quaternary ammonium compounds, halogenated compounds, sulfur compounds, phenyl derivatives, phenoxy derivatives, thiazoles, chlorinated phenolic compounds, poly-substituted immine salts and phosphate esters, and mixtures thereof.

10 ~~57~~. (New) A textile-based amusement article according to claim ~~56~~ wherein the microbe-cidal agent is chlorine dioxide.

11 ~~58~~. (New) A textile-based amusement article according to claim ~~56~~ wherein the microbe-cidal agent is 2,4,4'-trichloro-2'-hydroxydiphenol.